

History of the 354th Fighter Wing



and Eielson AFB



Written by the 354th Fighter Wing History Office
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354th Fighter Wing

The 354th Fighter Wing has a long and illustrious history. Since its constitution in 1942, the Wing's flying units have seen action in World War II, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf. From the skies over Germany to the sands of Iraq, the 354th has performed with distinction.

World War II

Activated at Hamilton Field, California on November 15, 1942, the 354th Fighter Group (354 FG) trained in P-39 aircraft there and at other Army airfields for nearly a year. In October 1943, the 354 FG moved to Greenham Common, England.



Lt Cols Glenn Eagleston and Jack Bradley brief crews before a mission over Germany in April 1945. Eagleston scored 18.5 aerial victories during the war and Bradley scored 15.

The first group to use the new P-51 Mustang, the 354 FG commenced combat action in December. From then through the end of the war, the Pioneer Mustang Group wreaked havoc on the German Luftwaffe; altogether, pilots of the 354 FG scored 599.25 combat victories. Lieutenant Colonel Glenn Eagleston was the leading ace, downing 18.5 aircraft. For a four-month period in late 1944 and early 1945, the 354 FG flew P-47s and switched its focus from escort and air superiority to fighter-bomber missions, strafing and dive-bombing enemy targets in Belgium, France, and Holland. Its efforts during the war earned the 354 FG two Distinguished Unit Citations and the French Croix de Guerre with Palm. After VE-Day, the group served with the army of occupation; in February 1946 it was transferred back to the United States and inactivated.

Myrtle Beach Air Force Base

On September 26, 1956, the Air Force resurrected the unit as the 354th Fighter-Day Wing and activated it on November 19, 1956 at Myrtle Beach AFB (MBAFB), South Carolina. Colonel Francis S. Gabreski became the wing's first commander. The wing was redesignated the 354th Tactical Fighter Wing (354 TFW) on July 1, 1958.

On October 18, 1957, the 354 FW emblem, which is still in use today, was approved. The blue alludes to the sky, the primary theater of Air Force operations, and yellow to the sun and excellence of personnel in assigned tasks. The diagonal stripes represent the components of the Wing. They symbolize a singleness of purpose to accomplish the Wing's mission – supremacy in the air. The red Pegasus is indicative of the fleetness and swift striking power of the Wing in battle. The crossed swords represent the tenacity, aggressiveness, and singular determination of the Wing



for victory in combat. They also indicate the preparedness, implying the Wing is ready to accomplish the objective.



Colonel Francis S. Gabreski
354th Tactical Fighter Wing Commander
19 Nov 56 - 12 Jul 60

Initially flying RF-80 aircraft, and by 1959 F-100 Super Sabres, the 354 TFW remained at Myrtle Beach until mid-1968. During that span, the wing's flying units deployed to the Dominican Republic for that country's crisis in 1965, and to Japan and Spain as replacement units for those involved in Vietnam. In 1966, one of its units deployed to South Vietnam, leaving the 354 TFW with a single flying squadron, the 355th Tactical Fighter Squadron, which left for Southeast Asia in April 1968.

From mid-1968 until June 1970, the 354 TFW served at Kunsan AB, South Korea, as host-wing for rotating Air National Guard F-4 squadrons. It returned without personnel or equipment to MBAFB on June 15, 1970, charged with combat crew training in T-33s and with becoming proficient in A-7 aircraft.

Southeast Asia

Two years later, in 1972, the wing split into rear and advance echelons, the latter commencing combat operations from Thailand in October 1972. The 354 TFW earned the Presidential Unit Citation for its service from October 1972 through April 1973. It recombined at Myrtle Beach in 1974.



354 FW A-7Ds on the flight line at Korat AB, Thailand

DESERT SHIELD/STORM

The 354 TFW converted to A-10 aircraft in 1977. For over a decade it conducted routine A-10 training missions, to include numerous deployments and exercises. That routine came to an abrupt end in August 1990, when the 354 TFW was deployed as one of the first units in the Persian Gulf to support Operation Desert Shield. When Desert Storm's air war began in January 1991, wing pilots initially flew against early-warning radar and Scud missile sites. The 354 TFW also flew search and rescue missions; Captain Paul Johnson earned the Air Force Cross when he and Captain Randy Goff, also of the 354 TFW, rescued a downed Navy pilot 200 miles



**Capt Johnson (right) and
Goff**

inside Iraq. As the conflict evolved, the wing turned its attention to deep interdiction missions and the Iraqi Republican Guard. Finally, when the ground war commenced in late February, the 354 TFW performed the mission it had been trained to do before the war - close air support.

By any account, the devastation was considerable. By the end of the conflict, A-10s throughout the theater destroyed over 950 tanks, 900 artillery pieces, and two helicopters in air-to-air combat.

Despite the rout, the victory was not without cost to the wing. Captain Steve Phyllis died while protecting his downed wingman, Lieutenant Bob Sweet. Later captured by the Iraqis, Sweet was repatriated after the war.

The 354 TFW returned home from the Gulf in March 1991, and was redesignated the 354th Fighter Wing (354 FW) in October of that year. Shortly after returning from DESERT STORM personnel learned that due to a recent Base Realignment and Closure review MBAFB was on the closure list. Two years to the month after returning from war the 354 FW inactivated and MBAFB closed. However, the wing would not remain inactive for long.



Colonel Sandy Sharp, 354 TFW Commander leads the wing out as they return to MBAFB, South Carolina after DESERT STORM

Less than five months later, on August 20, 1993, the 354 FW replaced the 343d Wing at Eielson AFB, Alaska. Air Force Chief of Staff General Merrill McPeak ordered the change as part of a service-wide effort to preserve the lineage of the Air Force's most honored wings.

Carl Ben Eielson



Carl Ben Eielson

Born in Hatton, North Dakota in 1897, Eielson served in World War I in the US Army Signal Corps' aviation section. A month before he was to depart for France, the war ended. He earned Second Lieutenant bars in March 1919, and was discharged the same day.

For several years thereafter, Eielson alternated between barnstorming and college life. He dropped both, temporarily it turned out, and in 1922 moved to Fairbanks to teach high school. Aviation continued to beckon, however; that same year he became the sole pilot for the North Aviation Company, an enterprise he and several local businessmen founded. After obtaining a surplus Army aircraft in the United States, Eielson soon began making regular commercial flights from Fairbanks. His cargo included supplies, mail, and passengers.

In 1924, the Company received a postal contract from the government. After a crash, it was canceled, and Eielson returned to the military. He served at Langley Field for most of 1925, before moving back to North Dakota and working as a bond salesman.

Arctic aviator Hubert Wilkins gave the erstwhile aviator another chance in late 1925, when he asked Eielson to pilot an expedition across the North Pole. After two unsuccessful attempts in 1926 and 1927, the pair succeeded in 1928, flying from Barrow, Alaska to Spitzbergen Island north of Norway. It was the first flight from North America to Europe over the North Pole. As such, it brought Eielson lasting fame. The feat earned him the Distinguished Flying Cross and the 1928 Harmon Trophy for the greatest aviation exploit of the year. Later in 1928, Eielson would also fly in Antarctica with Wilkins.

Eielson returned to Fairbanks in early 1929 and helped found Alaska Airways Incorporated. He died on November 9, 1929 while flying across the Bering Strait to Siberia, during an attempt to bring supplies to an ice-bound ship, the Nanuk. An international team of rescuers did not locate the wreckage until January 1930. Eielson is buried in North Dakota.

Eielson Air Force Base

On June 7, 1943, the Western Defense Command ordered construction of a new airfield near present-day Ft Wainwright, then an Army airfield named after Major Arthur Ladd. Because of its hazard-free approaches and relatively flat terrain, surveyor reports indicated a site a little more than twenty miles southeast of Ladd Field to be the best in the vicinity for military aviation. The field would become known as “Mile 26” because of its proximity

to a US Army Signal Corps telegraph station and a Richardson Highway milepost marker using the same designation.



26-Mile Field, circa 1945

A month later, contractors and civilian crews from Ladd Field started laying out the new airfield. Actual construction began on August 25, 1943. Crews built two parallel runways, 165 feet across and 6625 feet long. Other facilities included an operations building, housing for 108 officer and 330 enlisted personnel, and a ten-bed dispensary. The garrison and airfield totaled about 600 acres. Completed on October 17, 1944, the 14-month project cost about eight million dollars.

Operational uses of Mile 26 were few. Ladd Field served as the debarkation point for the Alaska-Siberia Ferry Route of the lend-lease program and was the hub of activity. Lend-lease aircraft would occasionally land at Mile 26, but there are no indications any lend-lease aircraft ever used the airfield to take off for Russia. Then when the war ended Mile 26 closed.

The base reopened in September 1946, once again as a satellite of Ladd Field. A year later, however, it moved from under the shadow of Ladd Field when the Alaskan Air Command assumed organizational control. Also in the fall of 1947, Colonel Jerome B. McCauley assumed duties as commander. The primary missions of Mile 26 were to support Arctic training for USAF tactical and strategic units, as well as defend the base itself.



5010 ABW emblem (originally approved on 5 Mar 59)

Headquarters USAF General Order 2, dated January 13, 1948, redesignated Mile 26 as Eielson AFB. Slightly more than three months later, on April 1, the Eielson AFB Wing (Base Complement) was formed. The host-unit subsequently would be dubbed the Eielson AFB Bomb Wing, and finally, in January 1949, the 5010th Wing. Colonel John L. Nedwed, the third commander of the base since it fell under Alaskan Air Command fifteen months before, became the first to head the 5010th. For the next 34 years, the 5010th - alternately known as the Wing, Composite

Wing, Air Base Wing, and lastly, Combat Support Group - served as host-unit at Eielson.

Construction boomed at Eielson AFB during the 1950s. Many of the facilities still in use today were built at that time - Amber Hall, Thunderdome, Base Exchange, Commissary, Gymnasium, Theater, Base Chapel, some of the schools and many of the dormitories, just to name a few.



Thunderdome under construction

In July 1960, the Strategic Air Command stationed the 4157th Combat Support Group (later Strategic Wing) at Eielson. The 6th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing (6 SRW) replaced the 4157 SW in March 1967. The 6 SRW remained at Eielson AFB until 1992. Other significant tenant units at the base included the 58th Weather Reconnaissance Squadron (WRS) "Pole Vaulters" and the 65th Fighter Squadron of World War II fame.



343 TFW emblem

A new chapter for the base began October 1, 1981 when the 343d Composite Wing replaced the 5010th as Eielson's host unit. Flying squadrons assigned to the new wing included the 25th Tactical Air Support Squadron (TASS) and the 18th Fighter Squadron (18 FS). The 25 TASS, at Eielson since 1971, flew O-2A and OV-10 aircraft until its inactivation in 1989; the newly assigned 18 FS operated A-10s until converting to F-16s in 1991.

In 1984, the 343d Composite Wing was redesignated a Tactical Fighter Wing. Seven years later, in 1991, it was redesignated as the 343d Wing. Also that year, the 343d gained a second flying unit, the 11th Tactical Air Support Squadron, which flew OA-10s.

The 354th Fighter Wing replaced the 343d Wing on August 20, 1993. No personnel or equipment were affected by the change. Prior to its shutdown, the 343d was the oldest surviving air combat unit in Alaska, with a lineage dating back to the Aleutian Campaign. The 18 FS, whose history also dated back to World War II, remained active, but the 355th Fighter Squadron replaced the 11th TASS. Also changing names were the 3rd Fighter Training Squadron, which became the 353rd Fighter Squadron (later Combat Training Squadron). The 353 FS and 355 FS have long associations with the new host unit.

Eielson AFB Chronology

June 11, 1944 - An L-5 was the first aircraft to land at Mile 26.

August 1947 - Although his main objective was a look at Ladd Field, General Hap Arnold toured Mile 26 in anticipation of the arrival of operational units.

March 6, 1949 - The 375th Reconnaissance Squadron was the first operational squadron assigned to Eielson AFB.

February 21, 1951 - The 58th Reconnaissance Squadron (Medium, Weather) replaced the 375th. The unit earned the nickname "Pole Vaulters" for their frequent trips over the North Pole. The unit primarily flew WB-29 aircraft however, it transitioned to WB-50 aircraft shortly before it inactivated in 1958.



Aircraft assigned to the 58 WRS

September 7, 1951 - Three people died in a C-47 crash about five miles southeast of the base. It was the first fatal accident involving an aircraft assigned to Eielson.

January 11, 1952 – A C-47 crashed 40 miles southeast of Ft. Yukon village. The crash site was not found until July 1952. Evidence indicated at least two of the crewmembers survived the crash, but perished in the bitter cold. Captain Ernie Walker, a Special Services officer, was on board the aircraft. In November 1953, the newly built Eielson AFB theater was dedicated in honor of Captain Walker.



Ernie Walker Theater

January 23, 1952 – Eielson AFB published its first base newspaper and held a base wide contest to name it. Two weeks later First Lieutenant Hal Pressman won the contest and the newspaper was named "Mile 26 Post." Over the years the name has changed to Eielson Friendly Times, Eielson Times, The Goldpanner, and to its current name Arctic Sentry.

January 25, 1952 - What was believed to be the biggest single-dormitory facility in the Air Force opened. Dubbed the 750-man barracks, the building would later be known as Ptarmigan Hall and in 1970, it was renamed Amber Hall.



750-man barracks under construction (Amber Hall)

July 1952 - Second Lieutenant Jean Mills was Eielson's first Woman in the Air Force (WAF). Lt Mills was assigned to the Food Services Squadron while at Eielson AFB.



2Lt Jean Mills

December 12, 1952 – Eielson AFB officials approved plans to rename Boundary and First Avenues as Broadway and Flightline Avenues, respectively. Many other streets assumed the names we know them by today, including Kodiak, Arctic, Wabash, and Central.

May 29, 1954 - Former 8th Air Force Commander and World War II hero General Jimmy Doolittle visited Eielson.

September 25, 1953 – A 58 WRS WB-29 crashed just after takeoff two miles north of the base. Captain Charles F. Baker, a weather observer assigned to the unit was the only fatality.

August 30, 1954 - Secretary of the Air Force Harold Talbott dedicated the Baker Field House. Home to a well-equipped gymnasium and a variety of other offices, the \$2.37 million facility was named after Captain Charles F. Baker.

August 1954 - The Eielson “Outlaws” - the name given to all base teams competing in downtown leagues - jumped out to a two-games-to-none lead against the Fairbanks Malamute-Redcaps, then dropped three straight to lose the North of the Range baseball league “World Series.” The Outlaw’s losses included two 9-8, extra inning decisions in games three and four. After a hiatus of many years, Eielson fielded an extra-mural baseball team again in 1995 - and again finished second in the post-season tournament.

January 1955 - During Operation Snowbird, First Lieutenant William Caffrey lost the canopy from his F-86 and his helmet at 32,000 feet. Still 100 miles from base, the 720th Fighter-Bomber Squadron pilot descended until he blacked out from lack of oxygen. After recovering consciousness, the radio-less flyer regained control of the aircraft, only to realize he didn’t know where he was. He eventually found himself near Eielson, and landed the plane uneventfully. He suffered frostbite on his ears and hands.

November 29, 1955 - An F-84 crashed into Eielson family housing, killing fourteen. Seven of the victims were children, including the first triplet's known to be born in the Fairbanks area. Forty years later, the base dedicated its new Child Development Center to the children.



F-84 crash, Nov 1955

December 1955 -January 1956 - An F-100 and B-52 arrived for cold weather testing. In September 1956, an RB-47 arrived for a 190-day cold weather test. As the Air Force northern-most base (except for Ladd), Eielson would host a number of tests over the coming years, most recently the C-17 in 1994 and B-2 in 1996.

April 2, 1956 - Eielson AFB acquired two L-20 Beavers from Ladd Field to support operations at the Blair Lakes bombing range.

August 31, 1956 - A 58th Reconnaissance Squadron WB-50, recently dubbed the “Golden Heart” in honor of the city of Fairbanks, crashed into the Susitna River near Willow. All eleven aboard died.

June 29, 1956 - General Curtis LeMay toured Eielson.

December 2, 1956 - The Bob Hope Christmas show performed at the base. Joining Hope were Mickey Mantle, Mitzi Gaynor, Ginger Rogers, Jane Powell, and Les Brown, among others. Hope performed at Eielson three times in the 1950s.

Jan 17, 1957 - A WB-50 assigned to the 58th Weather Reconnaissance Squadron crashed shortly after takeoff approximately three miles north of Eielson AFB. All 12 crewmembers were killed.

July 20, 1957 - Sixty years after his birth, Air Force officials, community and state dignitaries, and members of Carl Ben Eielson’s family gathered at the base to dedicate a memorial to the fallen Arctic pilot. Originally located just outside the main gate, the memorial’s present location is at Heritage Park.



Original Eielson monument at the main gate

September 9, 1958 - While flying as a relief navigator aboard an SC-47, Major Charles Pennell of Eielson's 11th Aviation Depot Squadron died in a crash at Elmendorf. Pennell Elementary School would later be named after him.



Pennell Elementary

September 11, 1958 - Screen star Mary Martin entertained Eielson personnel. Three months later, the Harlem Globetrotters performed.

February 1, 1959 - Captain Perry Amidon, suspecting the aircraft he was in to be out of control, ejected from the B-58 Hustler at 24,000 feet. The aircraft's pilot thought otherwise, however, and landed the plane at Eielson a few minutes later. The uninjured Captain Amidon, flew back to base about an hour later in a helicopter.

September 18, 1959 - The base dedicated Taylor Junior High School in honor of Airman Second Class Shelby C. Taylor, who died trying to free a co-worker from a power line at Quarry and Ski Lodge Roads. His work-mate was also killed.

February 27, 1963 - Airman Second Class and air policeman Roy L. Hursey was killed at his post when a KC-135 from Castle Air Force base plowed through the entry control building and exploded. Air Force officials later speculated that had the explosion taken place fifty feet to either side of the building, it would not have been seriously damaged. The building would later be named after Hursey.



Hursey dedication

April 21, 1964 - A WB-47 belonging to Detachment 1 of the 55th Weather Reconnaissance Squadron crashed on takeoff. Three of the five crewmembers died in the accident.

September 30, 1965 - An Eielson helicopter crew rescued two Baptist ministers after their light plane crashed between Nome and Moses Point. Throughout the 1960s, Eielson crews averaged several rescues each year.

November 17, 1967 - The quick response of the 5010th Combat Support Group to the Chena River flood (12-21 August 1967) and the subsequent help provided to Fairbanks and other communities led to the 5010th's third Air Force Outstanding Unit Award.

June 5, 1969 - A Rivet Amber RC-135 assigned to Eielson crashed in the Bering Sea minutes after leaving Shemya Air Force Base. Nineteen crewmembers died. Amber Hall, the headquarters building at Eielson, was named for the crew a year later.



An RC-135 taking off

August 23, 1969 - Air Force officials, community and state dignitaries, and family members gathered to dedicate the re-built monument to Ben Eielson. The original monument was destroyed by the 1963 crash, which killed A2C Hursey. Among the guests at the rededication ceremony was Alaskan Senator Ted Stevens, who provided the keynote speech.



Eielson Memorial rededication

July 8, 1971 - When Lieutenant Colonel James O. Swanson became commander of the reincarnated 25th Tactical Air Support Squadron, he had a borrowed desk, a telephone, and a promise for nine aircraft and accompanying personnel. It took two months to get the first O-2A “Mosquito,” and the unit’s complement of 14 officers and eight NCOs would not be complete until June 1972.

Despite the inauspicious beginning, the arrival of the 25th marked a significant addition to the mission of EAFB - that of air strike control and liaison for ground units stationed in Alaska.

February 1974 - Captain Carol E. Primson became commander of the newly formed Women in the Air Force Squadron Section. Eielson was home to 18 female personnel.

June 4, 1974 - The rock group KISS performed at the Baker Field House. The London-based group Savoy Brown headlined the event, alternately described as the area's "first big taste of the multi-million dollar rock industry" and "the most spectacular concert ever held in Alaska."

August 16, 1974 - The Comptroller released a study noting a twenty to thirty percent increase in housing costs in the Fairbanks area since pipeline construction began in May 1973. The report anticipated a continuing rise through 1977, when the pipeline was scheduled to be complete.

September 4, 1974 - Eielson and Elmendorf began receiving mail through regular US Mail service. Previously, the Alaskan bases used military post offices (APOs).

December 9, 1974 - An O-2A, assigned to the 25th Tactical Air Support Squadron at Eielson AFB, crashed while on a routine training mission on the Fort Greeley training area near Delta Junction. The pilot and co-pilot were both killed.



Eielson AFB O-2A

March 9, 1975 - A plan to consolidate the officer and enlisted clubs was voted down by members of both clubs. Twenty years later, fiscal realities led to the clubs' merger at the site of the officer's club.

May 1975 - Workers began construction of the Alaska Pipeline on Eielson AFB.



A portion of the Trans-Alaska pipeline that runs through Eielson AFB under construction

November 29, 1975 - President Gerald R. Ford stopped at Eielson en route to China. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger accompanied Ford, only the second President to visit Interior Alaska and the first to tour Eielson.

December 7, 1975 - All crewmembers died when a KC-135 assigned to Plattsburgh AFB in New York crashed after takeoff from Eielson.

January 15, 1976 - Air Force General George S. Brown, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, visited Eielson. Brown was observing "Jack Frost '76," an exercise featuring over 14,000 personnel from the Army, Navy, Air Force, and National Guard.

June 18-19, 1976 - Eielson hosted the 1976 Alaska Special Olympics.

February 1977 - Cold weather testing of the A-10 aircraft took place through the end of the month. As part of the test, the aircraft participated in the “Jack Frost” exercise also hosted by the base.

July 8, 1977 - Eielson firefighting, medical, and support personnel responded quickly to explosions and fire at Alaska pipeline Pump Station 8.

January 1979 - The base instituted a policy requiring that personnel reimburse the government for parkas lost through “simple negligence,” such as leaving it unsecured on a chair or rack. Some personnel took to chaining and padlocking their parkas to coat racks.

January 12, 1979 - Five-hundred Eielsonites braved sub-zero temperatures to view the Air Force’ newest aircraft, the as yet unnamed F-16. It was here for cold weather testing.

March 27, 1979 - Paul Airey, the first Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, spoke at the chartering ceremony for the Last Frontier chapter of the Air Force Sergeant’s Association.

March 15, 1981 - An RC-135 assigned to the 6th Strategic Wing crashed while attempting to land at Shemya Air Force Station, Alaska. Five crewmembers died as result of the crash.

October 1, 1981 - The 343d Composite Wing replaced the 5010th Combat Support Group as Eielson’s host unit.

February 27, 1985 - An RC-135 belonging to Eielson’s 6th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing crashed near Valdez, killing all three aboard. Exactly one month later, a 25th TASS pilot died while flying an Air Warrior mission in California.

October 25, 1986 - The 168th Air Refueling Squadron of the Alaska Air National Guard activated at Eielson. Later elevated to

Group status, the 168th flew KC-135 aircraft. As the only Arctic-based tanker group in PACAF, the 168th transfers more fuel than any other ANG refueling unit. It often participates in COPE THUNDER exercises. In 1994, the 168th boasted over 700 full and part time guardsmen. Although the 168th has only been active since 1986, KC-135s have been assigned to Eielson AFB for over 35 years.



KC-135s on the Eielson AFB flight line

November 21, 1988 - PACAF Commander General Merrill A. McPeak (became the Air Force Chief of Staff a few years later) visited Eielson AFB. Ironically, one of the policies he would implement few years later during his tenure as CSAF would impact Eielson's host unit.

June 17-28, 1991 – Pacific Air Forces premier flying training exercise, COPE THUNDER, came to Eielson. The eruption of Mt Pinatubo in the Philippine Island prompted the move; the subsequent closing of Clark AB, COPE THUNDER's home since 1976, brought the exercise to Alaska permanently.



Aircraft on the Eielson AFB flight line for COPE THUNDER

August 20, 1993 - The 354th Fighter Wing became the host-unit at Eielson AFB when the 343d Wing inactivated. General McPeak ordered the change as part of a service-wide effort to preserve the lineage of the Air Force's most honored wings.

March 20-26, 1994 - Eielson hosted Arctic SAREX 94, a joint search-and-rescue exercise featuring US, Canadian, and Russian personnel. The first exercise of its kind in the US, Arctic SAREX tested the interoperability of the participants SAR units, as well as established military-to-military contacts among the three countries.



1994 SAREX

July 15, 1994 - Colonel Ronald E. Keys was promoted to Brigadier General, becoming the first of his rank to command Eielson AFB.

April 1995 - Eielson AFB leadership dedicated its newly constructed Child Development Center in honor of the seven children that died on 29 Nov 55 when an F-84 crashed into military family housing.

February 1996 - Eielson took possession of the first twelve Moose Lake Section “801” military family housing units. In October, French Creek units for enlisted members began to open

up. Section 801 housing was privately owned, then leased back to the government. The first 801 housing in the Air Force were Eielson's "Cool Homes," constructed in 1986; the Moose Lake and French Creek homes were the last constructed under the provisions of Section 801 legislation.

March 1996 - Eielson hosted a B-2 for cold weather testing. The aircraft returned to Eielson in July for a ceremony where it received its name "The Spirit of Alaska."



B-2 at Eielson for cold weather testing

January - March 1997 - The 355th Fighter Squadron deployed to Aviano Air Base, Italy to support Operation DECISIVE EDGE, the peacekeeping mission in Bosnia. The deployment marked the first time an Eielson-based fighter unit deployed to a combat environment.

October - December 1998 - The wing deployed both flying squadrons to Al Jaber AB, Kuwait to support Operation SOUTHERN WATCH. While there, the 355 FS participated in Operation DESERT FOX, becoming the first Alaska-based unit to engage enemy targets since World War II.

March 1999 - Delegations from Japan and the Russian Far East Military district visited Eielson to observe Exercise NORTHERN EDGE activities.

August – December 1999 - The 355 FS deployed to Southwest Asia for a 90-day rotation in support of Operation SOUTHERN WATCH.

July 20, 2000 - Eielson AFB celebrated the grand opening of Heritage Park. Members of the Iceman Team also celebrated the 103rd anniversary of the birth of Carl Ben Eielson.

September – December 2000 - Aircraft and personnel from the 18 FS deployed to Incirlik AB, Turkey in support of Operation NORTHERN WATCH.

July 25, 2001 – While participating in a COPE THUNDER exercise a Royal Air Force Jaguar crashed, killing the pilot, east of Eielson in the Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve.

December 2001 – March 2002 - The 18 FS deployed to Al Jaber AB, Kuwait in support of Operations SOUTHERN WATCH and ENDURING FREEDOM. The unit flew over 3,200 hours in just three months.

354th Fighter Wing Commanders

<u>Commander</u>	<u>Assumed Command</u>
Col Francis S. Gabreski	19 Nov 56
Col Robert L. Petit	13 Jul 60
Brig Gen Gilbert L. Meyers	3 Oct 60
Col Joseph J. Kruzel	1 Apr 63
Col Franklin H. Scott	12 Jan 64
Col Herbert E. Ross	15 May 65
Col Harold L. Price	27 Jul 65
Col Warren R. Lewis	29 Oct 66
Col Edwin A. Schneider	28 Nov 66
Col William I. Williams	1 May 67
Col Wallace C. Bosworth, Jr.	19 Mar 68
Col Waring W. Wilson (additional duty)	22 Apr-2 Jul 68
None (not manned)	3-4 Jul 68
Col Donald W. Forney	5 Jul 68
Col Henry W. Ritter	5 Jun 69
Col Maurice G. Long	14 Jun 69
Col Albert R. Neville, Jr.	12 Jul 69
Col Henry L. Warren	25 Jan 70
Col Evan W. Rosencrans	15 Jun 70
Col Thomas M. Knoles III	21 Jun 71
Col William D. Curry, Jr.	1 May 73
Col Michael G. Filliman	25 Oct 74
Col Robert H. Reed	5 Aug 76
Col Michael P.C. Carns	23 Mar 79
Col Larry K. Barton	7 Oct 80
Col Roger A. Sorensen	10 Jan 83
Brig Gen Joel T. Hall	6 Apr 84
Col Joseph J. Redden	7 Jan 86
Col Robert G. Jenkins	12 Feb 88
Col Ervin C. Sharpe, Jr.	23 Feb 90
Col John R. Dallager	28 Aug 91
Col Richard H. McDow	8 Jul 92
Col James A. Moen	22 Sep 92
NONE (inactivated)	1 Apr-19 Aug 93

Col Thomas O. Fleming*	20 Aug 93
Brig Gen Ronald E. Keys*	14 Feb 94
Brig Gen Richard E. Brown III*	28 Sep 95
Brig Gen Tommy F. Crawford*	9 May 97
Brig Gen Kenneth M. DeCuir*	28 May 99
Brig Gen Bob D. DuLaney*	4 May 01
Brig Gen Jan-Marc Jouas*	3 Oct 02
Brig Gen Marke F. Gibson*	28 Jun 04

* = Also served as Eielson AFB Commanders

Eielson AFB Commanders

(prior to 354 FW activating at Eielson AFB)

<u>Commander</u>	<u>Assumed Command</u>
1Lt Ray Etmund (Chief Administrator)	20 Sep 43
2Lt McLure Reynolds	15 Dec 43
Capt Charles Sherman	22 May 44-unknown
Maj John McGuire	unknown-1 Jan 45
Maj Garland Furr	12 Jan 45-unknown
Maj John McGuire	unknown-7 Jun 45
unknown	8-27 Jun 45
2Lt Frank Sinclair	28 Jun 45-unknown
Colonel Jerome B. McCauley	2 Oct 47
Colonel Harry W. Generous	30 Mar 48
Colonel John L. Nedwed	14 Sep 48
Colonel William L. Eades	May 50
Colonel Edward W. Moore	Jan 51
Colonel James A. Ronin	30 Jun 52
Colonel Cordes F. Tiemann	9 Jun 54
Colonel Ray J. Will	6 Aug 55
Colonel Anthony G. Hunter	31 Oct 57
Colonel Stephen W. Henry	6 Jul 59
Colonel William W. Jones	5 Jun 62
Colonel Louis W. Rohr	30 May 66
Colonel Owen A. Weddle	17 May 68
Colonel Earl H. Ambrose	12 Aug 70

Colonel Vernon L. Allgood	15 Aug 73
Colonel Phillip R. Shepherd	30 Aug 74
Colonel Richard E. Merkel	28 May 76
Colonel Doyle C. Ruff	3 Jun 77
Colonel Carl W. Granberry	16 Jun 80
Colonel Rand Brandt	22 Jun 83
Colonel James G. Andrus	27 Jun 84
Colonel Philip W. Nuber	11 Oct 85
Colonel David B. Dingee	22 Jun 88
Colonel Clinton V. Horn	3 Jul 90
Colonel Thomas O. Fleming	1 Jul 92

354th Fighter Wing Command Chiefs

<u>Command Chief</u>	<u>Date Assigned</u>
CMSgt Edward A. Patterson*	1 Sep 75
CMSgt Kenneth R. Meeks*	25 May 79
CMSgt William J. Tucker*	20 Jan 82
CMSgt Robert A. Kalcevic*	1 Dec 83
CMSgt Michael W. Long*	1 Oct 85
CMSgt Wayne J. Chandler*	16 Nov 87
CMSgt Gary J. Moser*	1 Aug 89
CMSgt Ronald L. Satterwhite*	1 Aug 92
None (inactivated)	1 Apr 92–20 Aug 93
CMSgt Danny Buckner	20 Aug 93
CMSgt Michael L. Lawrence	4 Nov 95
CMSgt Robert J. Jeffers	20 Jun 97
CMSgt Philip D. Gilmore	31 Mar 99
CMSgt James A. LeVack	4 Jun 01
CMSgt Todd A. Kabalan	5 Jun 03

* = Held position at Myrtle Beach AFB, South Carolina

Eielson AFB Command Chiefs

(prior to 354 FW activating at Eielson AFB)

<u>Command Chief</u>	<u>Date Assigned</u>
CMSgt Ted Eaton (5010)	Oct 66
CMSgt R.O. Wayburn (5010)	Jul 69
CMSgt T.E. Krause (5010)	1 Oct 74
CMSgt Charles Pettit (5010/343)	28 Jun 75
CMSgt Ronald C. Huffman (343)	17 Feb 84
CMSgt Michael A. Galbraith (343)	Nov 87
CMSgt Richard K. Allen (343)	1 Aug 88
CMSgt James R. Beall (343)	3 Aug 90

5010 = 5010th Combat Support Group or Wing

343 = 343d Wing

Aircraft Stationed at Eielson

65th Fighter Squadron (1946-47; Det 1950-51)

P-51 (1946-47); F-80 (1950-51); T-33 (1950-51)

375th Recon Squadron (1949-51)

B/RB/WB-29 (1949-51); C-47 (1949-51)

58th Weather Recon Squadron (1951-58)

WB-29 (1951-56); WB-50 (1955-58)

5010th Combat Support Group (1949-81)

L-20 (by 1952-60); T-33 (by 1957-81); VC/SC/C-47 (by 1952-59, 1962-69); C-123 (1965-66, 1969-71);
CH/SH/HH-21 (1960-69)

40th Air Refueling Squadron (1959-61)

KC-97 (1959-61)

720th Fighter-Bomber Squadron (1954-55)

F-86 (1954-55); T-33 (1954-55)

455th Fighter-Bomber Squadron (1955)

F-86 (1955)

Det 3, 317th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron (1960-69)

F-102 (1960-69); F-106 (1965-69)

Det DC, 43 TFS, 21st Composite Wing (1970-82)

F-4 (1970-82)

Det 1, 55th Weather Recon Squadron (1960-68)

WB-47 (1960-68)

4157th Strategic Wing (1962-67)

KC-135 (1962-67); RC-135 (1962-67)

6th Strategic Recon Wing (1967-92)

KC-135 (1967-92); RC-135 (1967-92)

Det 1, 5040th Helicopter Squadron (1969-76); Det 1, 71st Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron (1976-80)

HH-21 (1969-70); HH-3 (1970-80)

25th Tactical Air Support Squadron (1971-89)

O-2A (1971-86); OV-10 (1986-89)

11th Tactical Air Support Squadron (1991-93)

OA-10 (1991-93)

18th Fighter Squadron (1981-Present)

A-10 (1981-91); F-16 (1991-Present)

168th Air Refueling Group (AANG) (1986-Present)

KC-135 (1986-Present)

355th Fighter Squadron

OA-10 (1993-Present); A-10 (1994-Present)

Flying Squadrons

The wing currently has two flying squadrons assigned, the 18th Fighter Squadron and the 355th Fighter Squadron. Although the 18 FS has only been assigned to the 354 FW for a little more than a decade, its history dates back to the Aleutian Campaign of World War II. On the other hand, the 355 FS is the only original squadron still assigned to wing since it's activation in 1942. The following pages provide a brief history for both squadrons.

18th Fighter Squadron History



18 FS Emblem (originally approved on 10 Nov 44)

The 18th Fighter Squadron was constituted the 18th Pursuit Squadron Dec. 22, 1939, and was activated at Moffet Field, Calif., Feb. 1, 1940. The 18th FS moved to Elmendorf Field, Alaska, Feb. 21, 1941, and began flying P-36s.

Redesignated the 18th Fighter Squadron May 15, 1942, the 18th FS participated in combat operations in the northern Pacific, as well as aiding the defense of Alaska during World War II. Throughout WWII, the 18th FS flew the P-40, P-39, P-38 and P-51 aircraft.

Redesignated the 18th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron in 1952, the squadron began operations at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport as part of Air Defense Command's Continental Defense Force. There, the 18th FS flew F-51s and later F-86s. In July of 1954, the 18FS moved to Ladd Air Force Base, Alaska, where for three years it flew the F-89 Scorpion and carried out air defense operations with Alaskan Air Command.

In August of 1957, the 18th FS was transferred to Wurtsmith AFB, Michigan., where it transitioned to F-102s. From May 1960 until its inactivation in 1971, the 18th FS operated from Grand Forks AFB, N.D., as an integral part of the interceptor force of Air (later Aerospace) Defense Command. There, the 18th FS flew the F-101 Voodoo.

The 18th FS activated in 1977 at Elmendorf AFB, Alaska and was redesignated the 18th Tactical Fighter Squadron. Its mission was to provide tactical air and defense operations using the F-4E. In January of 1981, the 18th FS was transferred to Eielson AFB, Alaska. In early 1991 the 18th FS transitioned to F-16Cs. The squadron was redesignated the 18th Fighter Squadron June 1, 1991.



18 FS F-16 over Mt. McKinley

In 1997 elements of the 18th FS deployed to Singapore and Malaysia to take part in dissimilar air combat tactic training as part of exercise COMMANDO SLING and COPE TAUFAN, respectively. The COPE TAUFAN deployment marked the first time Pacific Air Forces' F-16s had flown against MiG29s.

The unit deployed to Al Jabar AB, Kuwait, October-December 1998 to support Operation Southern Watch.

Later, the squadron deployed to Incirlik AB Turkey, Sept-Dec 2000, employing 5 F-16 aircraft and 110 personnel, conducting the first ever Combat Search and Rescue support tasking for an F-16 squadron in support of Operation Northern Watch.

After the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on 9/11/01, the 18th FS was called to generate eight aircraft for Alaska NORAD air defense during Operation NOBLE EAGLE. Although the aircraft never had to launch, the squadron was poised and ready to roll.

The Blue Foxes next deployment was to Al Jaber AB, Kuwait, Dec 2001-Mar 2002 to support simultaneous combat operations for Operations SOUTHERN WATCH and ENDURING FREEDOM. They flew more than 3,200 hours in only 3 months, an amazing feat for the 142 Blue Foxes who deployed with only 10 aircraft. During that time, the 18th FS flew missions in support of Operation ANACONDA, including one in the Shah-I-Kot valley on March 2 when U.S. forces, engaged in a firefight with Taliban and Al Qaeda forces, called for aerial assistance. A number of Blue Foxes responded, dropping bombs with pinpoint accuracy on the opposing forces. Two 18 FS pilots received Distinguished Flying Crosses for their efforts.

The 18 FS last deployment was to Andersen AFB, Guam in support of Operation NOBLE EAGLE during March 2003. The unit's last exercise was COMMANDO SLING, in October 2003.

355th Fighter Squadron History



355 FS Emblem (originally approved on 25 Jun 1957)

The 355th Fighter Squadron was activated Nov. 15 1942 at Hamilton Field, Calif., flying the P-39 Airacobra. The unit trained in California, Nevada, Oregon and New York before transferring to the 9th Air Force in England, November 1943. There, the "*Pugnacious Pups*" received the first P-51 Mustangs flown by the USAAF in Europe and began, almost immediately, to fly combat missions. Initially they escorted bombers to targets in Frankfurt, Leipzig, Augsburg, and Schweinfurt, Germany.

In April 1944, the squadron shifted from bomber escort to ground attack duties flying dive-bombing and strafing missions against targets such as marshaling yards, bridges and enemy airfields. After D-Day, in support of General Patton's 3rd Army, the unit helped establish the model for the joint close-air-support operations it conducts today.

During the critical first days of the Ardennes Offensive, the 355 FS was one of the few units to provide the air support that blunted German armored spearheads – only days after transitioning to a new aircraft, the P-47 Thunderbolt. After the German surrender, the unit was inactivated March 31, 1946.

Reactivated as the 355th Fighter Day Squadron at Myrtle Beach AFB, S.C., on Nov. 19, 1956, the renamed "*Fightin' Falcons*" flew the F-100D Super Sabre. The 355 FS supported NATO training with numerous deployments between 1958 and 1965 and, in response to the Cuban Missile Crisis in late 1963, deployed to McCoy AFB, Fla. The unit went to Southeast Asia and deployed to Phu Cat AB, South Vietnam in 1968, flying close air support, interdiction, search and rescue, and helicopter escort missions from January 1968- November 1970. The unit flew more than 14,000 combat sorties in the F-100D.

The squadron returned to Myrtle Beach in late 1970, and on Dec. 14, 1970, received the new A-7D Corsair II. In the fall of 1972, the 355 FS deployed to Korat Royal Thai AFB, Thailand, as the first A-7 wing to fight in the Southeast Asian campaign. In 10 weeks of combat, the unit participated in the Linebacker II campaign, generated over 4,000 sorties, and was credited with 22 rescues of downed airmen. The unit returned home in April 1974.

In February 1978, the 355 FS received the new A-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft, the "*Warthog*," to become the second operational squadron in the nation's first A-10 wing. In August 1990, the 355 FS returned to combat operations, deploying to King Fahd International Airport, Saudi Arabia, in support of Operations DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM. The unit inflicted heavy damage to enemy armor and artillery emplacement, cut off enemy supply lines, and conducted combat search and rescue missions. The squadron went on to claim its share of the 4,200 artillery, tank, and other vehicle kills in Operation Desert Storm.

Inactivated March 31, 1992 the 355 FS was reactivated at Eielson AFB, Alaska Aug. 20, 1993 flying the A/OA-10 aircraft. The unit's primary missions now included air strike control, close air support, interdiction, joint air attack team, escort, and combat search and rescue.

In October 1998, the 355 FS deployed to support Operation SOUTHERN WATCH. Only two months later, the Warthogs saw their second tour of combat duty over Iraq while participating in the Dec. 16-19, 1998, Operation DESERT FOX strike missions. In 2.5 months, the 355 FS flew 597 combat and combat support sorties leading up to, then conducting, National Command Authority directed strikes on Iraqi military facilities and suspected weapons of mass destruction storage areas. They achieved 100 percent target hit rate.

The unit's last deployment was to Al Jaber AB, Kuwait, in support of Operation SOUTHERN WATCH, January - March 2001. The 355 FS last exercise was to Hurlburt Field, Florida., to train with Special Forces units, October 2003.



355 FS A-10 over Mt. McKinley

354TH FIGHTER WING EMBLEMS



354TH FIGHTER WING



354TH OPERATIONS GROUP



354TH MISSION SUPPORT GROUP



354TH MAINTENANCE GROUP



354TH MEDICAL GROUP

